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The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 23 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on the escalation of violence in the Middle East issued on 18 April 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pierre **Schori**
Permanent Representative of Sweden
to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 23 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the escalation of violence in the Middle East issued on 18 April 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union is extremely concerned about the dangerous escalation of violence in the Middle East. The Israeli attack on Syrian objectives in Lebanon, the first in many years, as a retaliation for the Hizbollah attacks on the Shebaa farms, was an excessive and disproportionate reply. Furthermore, the excessive use of the army and the disproportionate Israeli reply to mortar attacks from Palestinian administered territories on Israeli targets further escalate violence and aggravate the conflict. Israeli incursions into Palestinian controlled territories are illegal and must not be repeated.

The spiral of violence must be reversed. The price to be paid by the peoples of the region could be high. The European Union urges all parties to act with maximum restraint, restore calm and do their utmost to prevent actions that may claim new victims.

The European Union remains convinced that there is no alternative to a negotiated solution based on international law, in particular, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace. The Union encourages both parties to engage in serious attempts to find a negotiated solution at this critical juncture and welcomes efforts that are made to this effect such as the Egyptian-Jordanian initiative.